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A cotton transport in the streets of Samarkand. To this day caravan traffic plays an important part in Turkestan.

101 pulated countries in the world. It is also known
133 as Chinese Turkestan, and today forms part of the province of Sinkiang. The greater part of the country is a barren wilderness (see ill. page 1435). The central part, called the Takla Makan desert, is not only uninhabitable, but practically impassable. The very small quantities of water which run down into this basin at the time of the melting of the snows form the river Tarim, which runs eastward into the salty lake of Lopnor. The few oases, of which Kashgar, Jarkend, and Khotan are the most important, are all situated on the margin of
492 this territory, along which the roads run. All
133 commerce goes by way of caravans which re-
484 quire months to cover the distance from China to Kashgar.

1 [Eastern Turkestan -- Analyst]

2 [See cat 116, p. 5 -- Analyst]

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

312 time one of the most flourishing towns of the Orient, and many other similar settlements have thus become deserted ruins, covered with thorny bushes and saksaul (salt shrubs). The irrigated districts on the contrary are exceedingly fertile; they produce cotton and fruit rather than grain. Apricots grow in such abundance that only a small portion of the harvest can be eaten or dried for the winter; pomegranates, figs, and grapes are to be had in large quantities. No country produces more or better varieties of peaches, and melons are grown even in districts which are practically deserts. Traffic by caravan (see ill. page 1434) has reached a very high standard of development.

The municipal civilization which has grown up in these oases is of great antiquity, as is shown by the Zend Avesta, the sacred book of the ancient Persians. Merv and other important towns have perished in the course of the centuries, others, like Samarkand, continue to flourish to this day. The libraries and theo-

Timur (Tamerlane, 1370–1405) in front of his tent surrounded by courtiers. Miniature in one of the oldest illustrated biographies of Tamerlane. 1467. Privately owned, Brooklyn.

[p. 3 -- Analyst]